

# Kwasi Kwarteng MP In contact

My journal



Christmas edition 2011



It feels almost unexpected that Christmas is already upon us, probably because we enjoyed such brilliant summer weather as short a time ago as October. Thinking back, though, a lot has happened since my June journal.

## IN WESTMINSTER

In the past few months, financial troubles deepened in Europe as it became clear that Greece couldn't pay back its debts. The problem is spreading to Italy, Portugal and Spain, which could impact on the UK's economy. Consequently, debate over Europe and shielding ourselves has been a big talking point in the House of Commons.



Eco Park debate, Westminster, September 2011

Some argue that we should spend more. But that doesn't make a lot of sense; the UK hasn't followed Greece's example exactly because the markets are impressed that spending is being reduced and, therefore, satisfied Britain can pay its creditors. Still, economic growth is slow, which is worrying.

Having spoken to local businesses, I realise that tax and red tape are having a stifling effect on operations. So, in October, I asked the Government: "My constituency of Spelthorne is driven by small business. May we have a debate on tax and tax reforms, and their effect on small business?" This hasn't happened yet, but as often in life, you just have to keep pressing; that's exactly what I'll be doing.

As an MP, it's part of my job to encourage the Government to plan ahead. The economic difficulties we face today were caused by wild over-spending. I think that if future governments were compelled to run a balanced budget we could

avoid running into the same problems again. Over the last few months, I've been putting this idea forward in Parliament and in the national press.

## LOCAL ISSUES

Back in September, I led an adjournment debate in Westminster on the "Eco Park" development in Shepperton, given the go-ahead by Surrey County Council; I highlighted local hostility to the plan and questioned the degree to which county councils are allowed to overrule popular opinion.

As most residents will be aware, the Secretary of State has chosen not to review the case, which is obviously very disappointing for a lot of people. Nevertheless, there might be other avenues to explore, and I will continue to support residents.

It's been disappointing to hear just recently that Brett Aggregates plan to submit another proposal to dig gravel at Manor Farm in Laleham, after withdrawing their application back in May.

At the time, campaigners did a great job in making their voices heard. It looks like this effort will be needed again, which is disheartening but shows why there's no reason that development can't be halted once more, and for good.

I'm opposed to the proposal, and it's uplifting to see that people are taking the initiative and campaigning already: an attitude that really stands testament to the community spirit, reflected across the local area over the last year. With that thought, I'd like to wish everybody an enjoyable Christmas, a good rest and a Happy New Year.

At Our Lady of the Rosary RC Primary School, November 2011



## IN SPELTHORNE

Being in Spelthorne is a part of my role that I enjoy immensely; here are some of the things I have been doing...

### Brooklands College

I visited the College's Ashford campus in December to see the Principal, Maureen Kilminster, and meet the students. The College does some excellent work, offering a range of courses from business and construction to hairdressing and beauty.

It's crucial, as a country, that we invest in the practical skills of our young people, so I'm delighted Brooklands are able contribute in this way.



In the Construction Department at Brooklands, December 2011

### Remembrance Sunday

On November 13, I attended the Remembrance service and parade in Ashford. The morning was faultlessly organised, on what was a beautiful sunny day.

Hundreds of people turned out to pay their respects to the brave men and women who have given their lives to protect our freedom, which was fantastic to see.



Remembrance Sunday, Ashford, November 2011

## Kwasi's Quiz

**Which famous admiral is said to have fished at Pharaoh's Island in Shepperton?**

**When did Heathrow Airport handle its first commercial flight?**

**Which is the oldest church in Spelthorne?**

**How long is the River Thames?**

Answers from last edition: Six; Sir Charles Barry; French Street; 90,000

### Local Democracy Week

In September, I joined pupils from seven local secondary schools at the Council Offices in Knowle Green, as part of Local Democracy Week. They took part in all sorts of events, including a mock election and parliamentary style debate.

It was really was good to see so many young people enthusiastically engaging with the workings of Parliament and democracy.



Talking to students during Local Democracy Week in the Council Chamber at Knowle Green, Staines, September 2011

### Visiting the Bank Manager

Back in July, I paid a visit to Barclays Bank on Staines High Street, where I met staff working at the cash desk, and others handling loans and mortgages. Then, during a meeting, I talked to the Branch Manager and Head of Corporate Affairs for London and the South about the status of their business and banking locally. Indeed, as an MP, keeping in touch with local banks is one way to keep tabs on the shape of the local economy because they have relations with lots of local businesses.

I hold regular advice surgeries from my office in Staines. As your MP, I can only assist with those matters for which Parliament or central government is responsible. I may be able to help you with problems relating to:

- \* Central government policies
- \* National Health Service
- \* H M Revenue and Customs (tax issues, child benefit)
- \* Department of Work and Pensions (benefits and pensions)

To arrange an appointment please call 020 7219 4017